

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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FOLLOWING REPEATS PARIS 3987 ACTION DEPT FEB 14TH

QUOTE

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DEPT. PASS MARAD, FCC, OTP, COAST GUARD, NASA

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETEL, TSPA, FR

SUBJECT: MARITIME SATELLITE TALKS WITH GOF

1. ON LAST DAY OF WHAT HAS SOMETIMES SEEMED TO BE VAUDEVILLE TOUR FOR US TEAM TALKS WERE HELD YESTERDAY AT MFA WITH GOF DELEGATION HEADED BY MFA BUT INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES OF PTT, SPACE STUDIES COUNCIL, TRANSPORTATION AND CNES. FRENCH RESPONDED WITH STATEMENT OF PLEASURE THAT US WOULD BE AT LONDON AND PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE IN INMARSAT IF US REQUIREMENTS ON DESIGNATED ENTITY CAN BE MET. FRENCH LISTENED CAREFULLY TO US PRESENTATIONS ON DESIGNATED ENTITY ROLE AND NEED FOR TWO-AGREEMENT APPROACH. THEY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT US PROPOSALS DID NOT COME AS NEWS TO THEM FOR THEY WERE ALREADY INFORMED OF SUBSTANCE OF OUR TALKS WITH BRITISH.

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AS WAS TRUE IN RESPONSES FROM OTHER GOVERNMENTS

THEY QUESTIONED NEED FOR TWO AGREEMENTS AND SUGGESTED THAT US NEEDS MIGHT WELL BE ACCOMMODATED IN MODIFICATION OF POE DRAFT. US TEAM RESPONDED ALONG LINE EARLIER REPORTED THAT OUR PRESENT POSITION HAD BEEN CAREFULLY THOUGHT OUT IN DISCUSSIONS WITHIN USG AND WITH US INDUSTRY WITH CONCLUSION THAT AMENDMENT OF POE DRAFT WAS NOT SOLUTION. WHEN FRENCH WERE REMINDED THAT PRESENT US POSITION OF DECISION TO PARTICIPATE IN INMARSAT WAS ALMOST COMPLETE REVERSAL OF EARLIER POE POSITION WHEN IT NOT CLEAR THAT US WOULD JOIN ORGANIZATION, FRENCH EXPRESSED THEIR RECOGNITION OF US POLICY SHIFT AND REITERATED PLEASURE THAT US WOULD PLAY CONSTRUCTIVE LONDON ROLE AND PLANNED TO BE PART OF INMARSAT.

2. UNLIKE MANY OTHER EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS FRENCH DID NOT EXPRESS CONCERN ABOUT POSSIBLE DELAY RESULTING FROM TWO-AGREEMENT APPROACH, ALTHOUGH THEY MADE CLEAR THEIR PREFERENCE FOR ONE AGREEMENT. THEY DID ACKNOWLEDGE, HOWEVER, DIFFICULTY IN ONE AGREEMENT SIGNED BY GOVERNMENTS CONTAINING SPECIAL EXCEPTION PERMITTING US TO ASSIGN FINANCIAL AND OPERATING RESPONSIBILITIES TO COMMERCIAL COMPANY. THERE WAS BRIEF EXCHANGE ABOUT ABILITY OF LAWYERS TO FIND TEXT TO MEET ANY REQUIREMENTS, BUT FRENCH ADMITTED THEIR RECOGNITION OF SERIOUS DIFFICULTY IN THIS REGARD.

3. THEY WERE CLEARLY CONCERNED ABOUT USSR ACCEPTING US SOLUTION, AS WELL AS ATTITUDES OF OTHER EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS. WHILE CONVINCED THAT GOF ALREADY HAD FULL BRIEFINGS FROM EUROPEAN COLLEAGUES, US TEAM NONETHELESS GAVE BRIEF SUMMARY OF OTHERS' VIEWS INCLUDING THOSE OF USSR, AND ALSO STATED THAT IN RESPONSE TO RUSSIAN REQUEST US HAD AGREED TO FURTHER TALKS WITH RUSSIANS PRIOR TO LONDON.

4. WHEN TALK TURNED TO LONDON CONFERENCE US MADE POINT THAT IMPRESSION RECEIVED IN DISCUSSION WITH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OTHER GOVERNMENTS WAS THAT FEW, IF ANY, HAD GIVEN HARD THOUGHT TO WHAT COULD REALISTICALLY BE EXPECTED AT LONDON. US EXPRESSED VIEWS ALREADY KNOWN TO DEPARTMENT ABOUT VARIETY OF SERIOUS MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED AT LONDON AND THAT US ASSESSMENT THAT OBJECTIVE THERE SHOULD BE AGREEMENT ON INMARSAT AND ASSIGNMENT OF TASKS TO WORKING GROUPS IN PREPARATION FOR SECOND CONFERENCE 12-18 MONTHS

LATER. GOF RESPONDED THAT IT TOO IS REALISTIC ABOUT WHAT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED AT LONDON IN TWO AND ONE-HALF WEEKS, AND WHILE RECOGNIZING TIME LIMITATION HOPES FOR ALL POSSIBLE PROGRESS. THEY AGREED WITH US THAT SECOND CONFERENCE IS REQUIRED, AND SUGGESTED EVEN THIRD CONFERENCE IS POSSIBILITY. FOR UNEXPLAINED REASON THEY PREFER TO DESCRIBE MULTI-STAGE CONFERENCE ACTIVITY AS PARTS 1, 2, AND 3 OF ONE CONFERENCE.

5. GOF LISTENED TO US PRESENTATION ON PROCUREMENT POLICY AND NEED FOR LOWEST POSSIBLE COST. THEY RAISED QUESTION OF PROBLEM THAT MIGHT BE CAUSED UNDER US ALTERNATIVE IF USSR SUBMITTED LOW BID, AND US RESPONDED ALONG LINE EARLIER REPORTED. THEY THEN MADE STATEMENT THAT CONSIDERATION OF LOWEST PROCUREMENT COST WAS NOT ONLY ECONOMIC PARAMETER OF CONCERN TO FRANCE AND OTHER EUROPEANS, AND FOLLOWED WITH THEIR INTEREST IN SEEING EUROPEAN INDUSTRY PARTICIPATION STATING THAT IT DOUBTFUL THAT LOWEST COST WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAN DISTRIBUTION OF INDUSTRIAL PARTICIPATION. THEY CITED PRESENT PROCUREMENT POLICIES UNDER SEVERAL EUROPEAN COOPERATIVE EFFORTS. SUBJECT WAS CONCLUDED WITH AGREEMENT THAT EACH SIDE UNDERSTOOD OTHERS' VIEW, THAT MATTER MUST BE WORKED OUT AT LONDON BUT THAT US SHOULD BE CAREFUL NOT TO OVERSIMPLIFY PROBLEM. IT IS CLEAR THAT AS FAR AS FRENCH ARE CONCERNED THEY HAVE LITTLE FLEXIBILITY.

6. GOF THEN STATED ITS CONCERN ABOUT POSSIBLE DAMAGE TO INMARSAT SHOULD A DESIGNATED ENTITY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DECIDE IN FUTURE TO WITHDRAW BECAUSE OF FINANCIAL LOSS. US RESPONDED THAT WHILE THIS WAS UNDERSTANDABLE GOF CONCERN, NONETHELESS THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF USG FINANCIAL GUARANTEE BUT THAT THIS COULD BE HANDLED IN NORMAL COMMERCIAL CONTEXT. ON OTHER MATTERS GOF VIEWS WERE:

(A) AGREE WITH NONDISCRIMINATORY ACCESS. THEY HAVE NO REAL PROBLEM WITH US FORMULA FOR INMARSAT PARTICIPATION ON BASIS OF IMCO OR ITU MEMBERSHIP, BUT PREFER GENEVA FORMULA. HOWEVER, THEY HAVE FLEXIBILITY AND NO STRONG FEELINGS. THEY ALSO HAVE NO STRONG POSITION ON CHARGING DIFFERENTIAL FOR MEMBERS AND NON MEMBERS, BUT EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE OF HAVING LARGEST NUMBER OF USERS.

(B) FRENCH AGREED ON IMPORTANCE OF SHIP OWNER/

OPERATOR VIEWS BEING CONTINUALLY SOUGHT AND EVALUATED IN INMARSAT COUNCIL BUT AGREED THAT DESIGN OF MECHANISM IS MATTER FOR CONFERENCE TO DECIDE.

(C) ON THE SUBJECT OF NAVIGATION FRENCH INDICATED A BELIEF THAT THE USE OF OMEGA FOR HIGH SEAS NAVIGATION AND A COMBINATION OF SHIP AND SHORE BASED RADAR FOR CONFLUENCE APPROACHES WOULD MEET SHIP OPERATOR NEEDS WITHOUT USE OF SATELLITE SYSTEMS. THEY DID AGREE, HOWEVER, THAT SYSTEM DESIGN SHOULD NOT PRECLUDE USE OF THE INMARSAT SYSTEM FOR NAVIGATION.

(D) ON THE SUBJECT OF SAFETY AND DISTRESS FRENCH AGREED THAT SUCH CAPABILITIES SHOULD BE INCORPORATED IN THE SYSTEM LOOKING TOWARD A LONG TERM GOAL OF SATELLITE SYSTEMS BEING AN ACCEPTED REPLACEMENT FOR RADIO EQUIPMENT REQUIRED UNDER THE SOLAS CONVENTION.

(E) AT PRESENT GOF POSITION ON USE OF MARITIME SATELLITE TERMINALS IN PORT IS NEGATIVE BECAUSE OF ALLEGED LOSS OF REVENUE TO PTT IN CASE OF SUCH USE. US TEAM POINTED OUT FALLACIES IN THIS APPROACH AND THAT MOST, IF NOT ALL, OTHER WESTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS FAVOR IN PRINCIPLE FREE USE OF THE FACILITIES IN PORT. GOF INDICATED A WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER THIS FURTHER AND TO DISCUSS IT WITH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THEIR EUROPEAN COLLEAGUES.

7. ONLY REMAINING TASK IS ESRO MEETING AND THEN TEAM TAKES OFF FOR US AFTER WHAT IT CONSIDERS A VALUABLE, INFORMATIVE AND EXHAUSTING TRIP.
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